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EDITORIAL

BRYAN'S UNDERSTUDY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“
_____ is willing and anxious to compromise with everybody on everything if the result promises votes. The old crusader — has disappeared, and the new cautious, conservative —, instead of being eager to fight every man who gets in — way, is seeking now only to patch all differences, to smooth out all wrinkles. Harmony is the sine qua non with —.”

Will somebody kindly fill in the blanks? Who or what is it that is now so eager after “harmony” that principles are thrown overboard like sandbags from a settling airship? What or who is it that if only “the result promises votes” can find no theory or character too iniquitous to compromise with? Who can it be that is thus drifting into the bogs of opportunism? What on earth is it that is now so hopelessly committed to a career of “practical politics” and “constructive policies”?

As the puzzling paragraph appears in the capitalist press, the blanks are filled with the name of W.J. Bryan, aspirant-elect for Presidential emoluments on the Democratic ticket. But a vague suspicion flits across one's mind that the special correspondent who penned it was belatedly using his notes on the Socialist party national convention held in Chicago last May.

The very delegates themselves declared as much.

“If this were a Single Tax convention, or a Bryan or a Hearst meeting, or a Rooseveltian reform society, I should not be surprised at having a report like that brought in,” said delegate Morrison of Indiana, in the debate on the minority report of the Farmers' Committee.

“This would look very pretty in a reform platform. William Also-Ran-Dolph Hearst will see that there are slathers of that thing in the platform of his Independent party,” were the words of delegate Johns of California, against the

Government Ownership of Railroads, etc., plank.

“If the Milwaukee delegates have the idea that they will bolt, I suppose there is room in the Populist band-wagon,” retorted delegate Clark of Texas to Victor L. Berger’s threat to pull out of the convention in the course of the trades union discussion.

Evidently Bryan the Peerless is not peerless in the matter of compromise and chloroforming of principles. But between him and the S.P. lies the great gulf fixed that his chloroforming may land him—torpid, it is true, but still alive—in the Presidential chair; while that of the S.P. can but land it in its coffin, as far as the working class of America is concerned.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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